

Lecture Review -

The Spread of English in Australia and Japan: Sociolinguistic Context and Variety Development

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Introduction

On January 15, 2016, Dr. Saya Ike, lecturer at Sugiyama Jogakuen University, delivered a paper to studentsⁱ and faculty of the College of World Englishes, entitled "The Spread of English in Australia and Japan: Sociolinguistic Context and Variety Development." Ike was raised in Osaka and did her masters and doctoral work at Melbourne University, so is quite familiar with English in both of these contexts.



Lecture Content

The main attendees were the department's second year students, who have all taken the Introduction to World Englishes class in their first year, so have some basic understanding of the concepts in the field. Nevertheless, the lecture started with a quite fundamental review of world Englishes concepts. Based on Jenkins (2005, 2009) Ike outlined the three diasporas of English: the first to North America, Australia and New Zealand in which settlersⁱⁱ who transported the language became permanent residents, the second to Africa and Asia where English functions as a second language, and the third diaspora, to the rest of the world.

Regarding the conceptual 'modelling' of world Englishes, Ike presented Kachru's well-known Three Concentric Circle Model (1985), with the Inner Circle representing 'English as a native language' contexts, the Outer Circle representing former colonial contexts where English has some sort of official status, and the Expanding Circle for those contexts where

English has traditionally been labeled as a 'foreign' language. Ike explained that Kachru modified this model in 1992, in which the Inner Circle was moved to the bottom with the other two circles above it, due to criticism that his original concentric model still placed the Inner Circle varieties in a 'privileged' position at the center. At that time Kachru also enhanced the model, to explain the progression of new varieties of English from 'Non-recognition' (where there is still a strong bond to native speakers), to 'Nativization and Localization,' and finally to 'Recognition.' An alternative approach in the modelling of world Englishes comes with Schneider's (2003, 2007) widely used Dynamic Model, in which each variety of English is seen as potentially progressing through five 'phases': Foundation, Exonormative Stabilization (in which norms are mainly from outside the country), Nativization, Endonormative Stabilization (in which the country begins to establish its own internal norms for English), and finally, Differentiation.

Schneider's Dynamic Model has been extensively applied to Outer Circle contexts such as Singapore or the Philippines, but has less often been applied to the Inner circle, and has rarely been applied to an Expanding Circle context such as Japan.ⁱⁱⁱ This led to the next section of the lecture, entitled 'Reconsidering the Dynamic Model,' via a comparison of English in Australia and Japan. Considering the geography and demographics, the two countries are quite different. Australia has 20 times the land mass of Japan, but being largely desert, only one-fifth the population! In terms of ethnicity, Japan is 98.5% Japanese, while Australia is now increasingly diverse, and only 85% of Anglo Saxon origin. Regarding language, Japanese is the language of 99% of those in Japan, yet in Australia English is the main language of 83.7% of the population.

The Australian Context

There is evidence that some of the earliest forms of mankind thrived in Australia, and aboriginal groups have a long history there, traceable back to a point somewhere between BC 75,000 - 50,000 (Harris 2003). Ike provided the students with a basic review of the colonial history of Australia. The first western explorer to 'discover' Australia was the Dutch seafarer Abel Tasman, who reached the continent in 1644, naming it New Holland. The Dutch were eventually supplanted by the British, with James Cook arriving in Sydney in 1770, followed by the first fleet in 1788, when Arthur Phillip established a colony in Australia. At this time there were 1,500 English and an indigenous population of 750,000. Between 1788 and 1868 16,000 convicts were sent to Australia from England's overcrowded jails, and from 1790 free settlers also began to arrive. The discovery of gold in Australia in 1851 brought a large influx of European settlers, while at the same time, the indigenous population declined to between 15,000 and 58,000 at that time, due to disease and other

factors (Harris 2003). In 1901 Australia gained its independence and was granted Dominion status. The population at that time was 98% Caucasian.

Regarding sociolinguistic history, from 1901 to 1958 a 'White Australia Policy' was maintained, via the Immigration Restriction Act, whereby a very difficult dictation test was administered to applicants. For example, a French dictation test would be given to Chinese nationals seeking to live in Australia. The Restriction Act was reviewed in 1966 and the dictation test was abolished. Overall, between 1948 and 1975, there were 3.8 million new immigrants to Australia. The White Australia policy was abolished in 1973 in favor of a policy of multiculturalism. Ike pointed out the remarkable statistic that today, 24.1% of Australians were born outside of the country, and 26% of those born in Australia have one parent from overseas.

Where there were once 600 to 700 local dialects and 250 different Aboriginal languages, there are only 145 existing today, with 110 of them endangered, and just 60 currently used as an L1. Since most Aboriginal languages have no writing system, the language disappears with the death of the last speaker. Thus the linguistic landscape today has English as the de facto national and official language. It is the L1 of 83.7% of the population. Mandarin is spoken by 1.6%, Italian by 1.4%, Arabic by 1.3%, and 12% fall into the category of 'Other'.

Ike then asked, 'Does the dynamic model work for the Inner Circle? She presented a detailed analysis of Australian English's progress through each of Schneider's phases. She sees Australia as having reached Phase 4 with the elimination of the Immigration Restriction Act which coincided with a more favorable view of Aussie English, and outlined the work of Bradley (2008) which indicates that since the 1980s, regional characteristics have been emerging: indicating that Australia has reached Phase 5. One problem with applying Schneider's model, is that Aboriginal Englishes have not gone through the same development process as mainstream Australian English. In addition, among the speakers of 'Cultivated' Australian English (the acrolect, spoken by 20-30% of the population), there is still a strong influence from British 'Received Pronunciation' (RP).

Ike then introduced the students to some features of Australian English, providing video or recorded examples of 'General' Australian English (the mesolectal variety, spoken by 60-70% of people) and the more heavily accented 'Broad' Australian (spoken by 10%). For example, the vowel which is pronounced as [ei] in standard British and American English is usually pronounced [ai] in Australia, e.g. today, eight, baby, as in the famous example "Todie is a good day." (Horvath 2008) The vowel [ai] e.g. time, high, why also undergoes change, to a more rounded sound, such as 'toime' or 'woi'. She also cited Mulder and Penry Williams (2014) to give examples of the common Australian practice of 'clipping' (known also as hypocoristics) with such commonly used examples as 'barbie' (barbecue), 'brekkie' (breakfast), 'footy' (football), 'arvo' (afternoon), and 'Jono' (Jonathan). Examples of

morphological and syntactic localization in Australian English include British-based spelling (centre, theatre, realisation, travelling), vocabulary influenced by Aboriginal languages (kangaroo, koala, boomerang), and preferred syntactic styles such as reversal of the transitive and intransitive 'got' and 'gotten', and adoption of 'but' in final position as seen in a blog entry: "Ready to go a-pirating on the streets of London. A bit nervous about the hooligans but"

The Japanese Context

Ike then began an analysis Japan and Japanese English. She looked at the sociolinguistic history of English in Japan. The year 1600 saw the arrival of the first English, and William Adams became the first Western samurai. At this time English had limited functions and was only used for the specific purpose of trade. There was no emergence of loanwords or other creativity in English in Japan at that time. The period from 1635-1808 was called *sakoku*, when there was a closed-door policy. English essentially disappeared from Japan for 200 years, and the main foreign languages were Dutch and Chinese. 1808 saw the re-arrival of English, with the HMS *Phaeton* incident at Nagasaki Harbor. There was hence an immediate need for English for purposes of defense, although there was still a limited source of English, and a limited number of learners - mainly state interpreters. The period from 1853/4 saw an opening of the country, and a shift in the functions of English from defense to trading, and the importing of Western scientific knowledge. On the basilectal side, Yokohama pidgin emerged as a trading language, which at the acrolectal level, there was English-medium education for elites. During the Meiji Era, from 1868, there was continued Westernization and the spread of British English to a wider range of socio-economic groups. In spite of the proposal to make English an official language by Mori Arinori in 1872, English-medium higher education shifted to Japanese-medium with the founding of Tokyo University in 1886. Ike pointed out that had this decision not been made, the progress of English in Japan could have taken a very different course. Still, a certain amount of nativization did occur at this time, with increased code-mixing, adoption of loanwords, and some shift in semantic meanings.

During the period of hostility with China and World War II, Japan saw increased nationalism, and there was an official government language policy known as *genbun itchi undou*. There was a decline in English borrowing in the press and in spoken conversation. Still, there was according to Ike, a growing attention and familiarity with English and the start of English loanword analysis, with 5,018 entries of 'Japanized English' in the Arakawa Dictionary of 1931. The post-World War II period of the American Occupation saw an increased need for American English, s greater amount of English loanwords into the

Japanese language, and the emergence of several pidgins including Pango: the form of English used between occupation forces and prostitutes, and so called Bamboo English: used between American military staff and Japanese laborers and servants. This period also saw the start of compulsory English education in schools.

Moving into the present, Ike outlined recent trends of English in Japan. In 2000 there was again consideration of making English an official language, as floated by Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo. In 2003 the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) formalized its Action Plan to develop 'Japanese with English Abilities', and this has been followed by various efforts to improve English education in Japan, such as introducing English 'compulsory activities' into 5th and 6th grade in 2011, and by 2018, it will be given that status in 3rd and 4th grade, while in 5th/6th grade it will become a 'compulsory subject' (formally evaluated) rather than just 'activities'. Ike then summarized some key points regarding English in Japan, including the strong influence of American English and desire for native varieties of English (Seargeant 2009), that English is mainly for international communication, the increase of English in public signs in Japan (along with the decorative /emblematic use of English), the increasing number of English loanwords in Japanese - possibly as high as 7-10% of the total Japanese lexicon (Honna 1995). There is also increasing demand for English as an official language in business (e.g. Rakuten, Honda, UNIQLO), creation of new English phrases via 'Wasei Eigo', and negative attitudes towards Japanese English by the local population in terms of accent and limited speaking ability.

Ike then considered Japanese English in terms of Schneider's 5-phase Dynamic Model, which is her main lens for considering new varieties. While Australia progressed through the stages much quicker than Japan, she does see the stages as a useful way to consider English in Japan. The time of Yokohama Pidgin can be seen as the Foundation phase. The time of English education for elites, and also the increase in the importance of American English in the postwar era, indicate the Exonormative stabilization phase. Finally, with more intranational and international use of English and moves such as Obuchi's effort to make English an official language, the increased study by linguists of features of Japanese English, as well as the increased internal use of English at companies such as Rakuten, we see the beginning of the Nativization phase, and possible indications of entering the Endonormative stabilization phase.

Ike then presented some specific features of Japanese English. She mentioned that there is still some confusion in scholarly works as to whether to focus mainly on English borrowings into Japanese (Stanlaw 2004) or to actually look at the English used by Japanese. Some studies focus largely on Japanese-like pronunciation, or 'katakana' English (pronunciation influenced by the mora-timed nature of Japanese), or on incorrect forms of English grammar or semantics. On the positive side, work by Honna (1995) or Crawford (2006) and Ike

(2010, 2012) look at creativity in Japanese English, such as the example of the word 'challenge'. Crawford (2006) outlines how the word undergoes orthographic (into katakana), phonological, grammatical and semantic changes as it is brought into Japanese as 'charenji', but then as it is used by Japanese speakers of English, the spelling and pronunciation become closer to the original, but the grammatical and semantic changes may be partly preserved. An example would be: if a Japanese person asked a foreign-resident in Japan, "So I understand you will challenge the Nagoya Marathon this year!" This creative usage is rather different than would be seen in usual American English, where a speaker might say, "I understand you are going to try running the Nagoya Marathon this year!" or some other variation. Ike also outlined several other views of Japanese English, such as, "English spoken by educated speakers of Japanese English" (D'Angelo 2005, 2010), "English spoken by Japanese in EIL communication" (Ike 2012), and "an English variety as an international language" (Hino 2012).

According to Ike, in terms of grammatical features, one tendency commonly observed among Japanese speakers of English is to revert to the present tense when relating past events. Examples she provided included, "But he didn't know that the baby car is just behind his car" and "He saw the ghost in the hotel, but the only witness who can prove what he said is the ghost." Also common is omission or irregular use of definite/indefinite articles, such as with, "Mr. Bean was trying to enter amusement park", or "He was driving the his car." Other common usages by Japanese users of English include lack of attention to irregular past tense makers, such as with "You know, the baby car stuck to his car," and the omission of plural markers, as in "A lot of nice present" or "You know, with this map, many person have trouble...". Ike also played recorded examples from her data, of vowel epenthesis in Japanese English, in which words such as 'like', 'trend', or 'and' become two or even three syllables (to-ren-do). The important point to realize here is that all varieties of English will show influence of the users' L1, and whether we treat these variations as errors or not, depends much on how prescriptive (or flexible/open) individual teachers choose to be. Ike then introduced some unique lexical features of Japanese English, which included 'concent' for electrical outlet, and 'baby car' for pram or carriage. Also seen are morphological modification (Olympic, ice coffee), semantic modification (mansion), creative compounds (back mirror) and shortened forms (paso-com). Again, a native-speakerist view of English might identify these as 'errors', but according to Ike, in international communication, Japanese may tend to use them (just as people from Finland, Brazil or China might have their own creative usages), and being able to negotiate across these usages is increasingly a necessary skill for global users of English, rather than trying to impose narrow native-speaker usages.

Some final features of Japanese' English which Ike drew the audience's attention to

include writing structure, such as in the common use of 'There constructions' (Miyake & Tsushima 2012), pragmatic differences such as indirect requests and refusals (Gass & Houck, 1999), and discourse tendencies such as frequent use of backchannels (Ike 2010, Ike and Mulder 2012, 2014, 2015). This tendency to use backchannels by Japanese users of English is a prime focus of Ike's research, and she provided video examples which showed the difference in use of backchannels by two dyads: one of two Australians and one of two Japanese. The Japanese pair used frequent backchannels (mainly nodding and 'hmm hmm' sounds), whereas with the Australian pair, it was much less frequent. In response to a question from the audience regarding the function of backchannels, Ike explained that among Japanese, they are used for three purposes: confirming that the other speaker has 'the floor', for expressing understanding, and for expressing agreement, whereas among Australians, the first function is much less common.

In her conclusion, Ike provided a summary of the differences in the development of English in Australia and Japan including that Australia was part of the first diaspora, whereas Japan was part of the third diaspora. In Australia, English users outnumbered indigenous language speakers from an early stage, whereas in Japan local language uses outnumber English speakers. In terms of identity construction, while some Australians continue to identify themselves as of British origin even today, the majority view themselves as independent. In Japan, the role of English in people's identity construction is still in a very early and limited phase. She concluded that while Australia and Japan have roughly the same length of contact with English, the sociolinguistic contexts differ in terms of how English was transplanted (via immigration for Australia, as compared to via cross-cultural contact for Japan), the language contact between English and local language(s) in the two contexts, and the role of English in identity construction as well. Her final conclusion was that the future of English in both countries is still quite unpredictable.

Evaluation

The lecture was very informative, and proceeded from a quite basic level regarding each topic, to somewhat sophisticated analysis. The lecturer was also able to take advantage of the 90-minute time allotment to proceed quite slowly through the content. The students in the audience could benefit from listening to a content lecture in English, and also hear the Australian-influenced educated Japanese English of a fellow Japanese national. Several students commented to the author that they could understand 60-70% of the lecture, which is quite good considering its academic nature. In terms of the analysis, it was constructive to see Schneider's model applied to new contexts, and this demonstrated the flexibility and overall usefulness (as well as some weaknesses) of the model. Nevertheless, the two contexts

are so different, that (in the author's opinion) it might have been more useful to look at Japan and one other Expanding Circle context where English is used widely and effectively, such as Sweden or Holland, or another competing Asian context such as Korea, to get a better idea of where Japan stands in its ongoing effort to "develop Japanese with English abilities".

Selected References

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NOTES

- i The main group of students in attendance were from Professor D'Angelo's Language Variation class, which is open to students from all three current majors in the College of World Englishes. The lecture was sponsored by the Graduate Major in World Englishes within the Graduate School of World Englishes.
- ii See also review of S. Mufwene lecture in *Journal of College of World Englishes*, vol. 6. (2004)
- iii Since Expanding Circle varieties are considered by many not to be mature or stable enough to be codifiable.